

3. AMEND THE CLAIMS:

1. through 21. (Canceled)

22. (Allowed) A reciprocating foot pedal exerciser for realistic, normal walking, jogging, running and stepping in place enabling automatically variable length strides, comprising:

a pair of foot pedals for receiving user foot action at a substantially constant forward step-down position on the exerciser;

support means for guiding said foot pedals in primarily back and forth strokes variable rearwardly from said forward step-down position and

means for returning said foot pedals to said forward step-down position at the end of each stride independently of stride length;

said means for returning applying a return force to a foot pedal only during each said foot pedal's return stroke.

23. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning returns a rearmost one of said foot pedals to said forward step down position using step-down energy.

24. (Currently amended) The exerciser of claim 22 having arresting means [[to stop]] for stopping returning said foot pedals at said forward step-down position, energy conversion means and energy storage means [[to recuperate]] for recuperating energy of returning said foot pedals and means [[to apply]] for applying said energy to said means for returning .

25. (Currently amended) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including power and control means for connecting the downward force and deflection of a forward one of said pedals to the rearward one of said pedals to propel said rearward pedal forward.

26. (Allowed) The exerciser in accordance with claim 22 wherein said means for returning includes fluid means.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently amended) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including a speed regulating means [[to control]] for controlling rearward motion of said foot pedals.

29. (Previously presented) The exerciser according to claim 28 wherein said regulating means comprises spring and damper means.

30. (Previously presented) The exerciser according to claim 28 wherein said regulating means comprises rotary resistance means.

31. (Currently amended) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including a motorized speed regulating means [[to control]] for controlling rearward motion of said foot pedals.

32. (Previously presented) The exerciser according to claim 31 wherein said regulating means comprises frictional drive means interconnecting said motorized means and said foot pedals.

33. (Previously presented) The exerciser according to claim 31 wherein said regulating means comprises fluid pumping means interconnecting said motorized means and said foot pedals.

34. (Currently amended) The exerciser according to claim 31 further comprising:

a sensor means [[to sense]] for sensing the user's foot force rearward or forward on said foot pedal and;

a control means [[to receive]] for receiving a signal from said sensor means and to vary the speed of said motorized means in response to said foot force.

35. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including foot pedal braking means to brake forward motion of said foot pedal when said user is standing on said foot pedal.

36. (Currently amended) The exerciser according to claim 23 further including ~~[[cushion]]~~ a means integral with said return means ~~[[to cushion]]~~ for cushioning the user's step-down on said foot pedal.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning employs energy sources external to a user.

39. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 38 wherein said external energy sources include fluid power means.

40. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning employs stored energy from a plurality of sources.

41. (Allowed, currently amended) A reciprocating foot pedal exerciser for walking, jogging, running and stepping in place enabling automatically variable length strides, comprising:

foot pedals for receiving user foot action at a forward step-down position;

support means for guiding said foot pedals in primarily back and forth strokes variable rearward from said step-down position and

means for returning said foot pedals to said forward step-down position at the end of each stride at velocities substantially greater than stride velocity~~[[:]]~~

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said means for returning applying a return force to a foot pedal only during each said pedal's return stroke.